

Integrating School Health Services

Following the establishment of a model and framework for the local school health program, attention may be turned to service areas in coordinated school health. As a component of the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](#) (WSCC) model, the School Health Services component is the primary responsibility of the school nurse. According to the CDC, “School health services intervene with actual and potential health problems, including providing first aid, emergency care and assessment and planning for the management of chronic conditions (such as asthma or diabetes). In addition, wellness promotion, preventive services and staff, student and parent education complement the provision of care coordination services.”

As discussed in Section B, Chapter 1, each component of the WSCC model includes roles for a variety of school staff and other professionals. In addition, each individual WSCC component is integrated to a degree into the focus of all other components. Graphics are available with evidence-based strategies and promising practices that address this integration at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscs/strategies.htm>. Use of these tools allows the school nurse to develop the local school health program in a coordinated manner.

The health issues of school children today are complex. The range of services needed extends beyond the simple identification and control of illness or disease. The school setting is a place of wellness with a primary focus for the school nurse on prevention of disease and health promotion, both on the individual student and school population level. Prevention directed activities are commonly described in a multi-tiered manner, as follows.

Primary Prevention

The area of primary prevention includes all activities related to health promotion and specific protection from known threats to health to keep students from becoming ill or injured. School nurses offer information and counseling that encourages positive health behaviors.

Examples in the school population:

- Assure immunization compliance.
- Counsel students, families and school personnel on common risks to health.
- Monitor the school environment to identify and eliminate specific health hazards.
- Coordinate health promotion activities with other partners to raise awareness and encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Participate on the school health advisory council.
- Contribute to the development of school health policy.

Secondary Prevention

Secondary prevention, a form of early disease detection, identifies individuals with high risk factors or preclinical diseases through screenings and regular care to reduce or minimize negative consequences.

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Examples in the school population:

- Review of health assessments and completion of health screenings.
- Organizing screening programs for detection of problems that may interfere with learning, such as vision or hearing deficits (see Section D, Chapter 7).
- Providing assessment and referral for students with acute physical, mental or behavioral issues.

Tertiary Prevention

The third tier of prevention, tertiary prevention, includes services intended to prevent additional disabilities and to maximize the use of remaining capabilities. Many children requiring this level of intervention have complex health problems requiring professional nursing management.

Examples in the school population:

- Develop, implement and oversee individual healthcare plans/emergency action plans (see Section C, Chapter 4).
- Participate in multi-disciplinary placement conferences for children with healthcare related needs.
- Administer medication and/or treatments as authorized.
- Train unlicensed assistive personnel in authorized special procedures (see Section C, Chapter 7).
- Provide case management services for chronic health conditions (see Section C, Chapter 5).

The role of the school nurse as the manager for school health services and the components of those services are covered in Sections C and D. The professional school nurse recognizes that, when functioning within the full scope of practice, the school nurse role extends into all components of a coordinated school health program. The promotion of a healthy school environment with a healthy student, ready to learn, is the ultimate goal across all of the components and disciplines.